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1

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Hey, c'mere. I won't kill you. I promise.

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Didn't anyone ever tell you you're not supposed to walk the border between heaven and hell?

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Wait! No, don't run, it's okay. You're good. You won't get in trouble if you're careful, there aren't any other cats around. Not ones that are strong enough to interact with you, I mean.

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I wouldn't suggest it. All the cats here, they aren't well, even if they started out decent.

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You do look young, not quite fully filled out.

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You were an apprentice, weren't you? Died young. That sucks.

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Yes, you can see me shivering, thanks for asking and changing the topic entirely. It's not...really cold here. Maybe for some cats, but I don't feel all that much, body-wise. Numb is a good word to describe it.

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I could change things up, drop the facades and just tell you straight out all the gory details of my death and punishment, but that feels like it'd be too much.

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Don't back away, you stayed the first time. It's too late to leave now.

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We don't get a lot of visitors-not many that don't become full-time stayers, at least. Can you blame me for being a little excited?

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I'm aware I always have a blank, not at all enthused look to me, but this is my excited face.

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My name is Babblestream. Don't tell me yours, I won't remember it.

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I...killed some cats, yes, but so have all the great warriors and leaders that you idolize. Of course, those murders were justified ones, right? The blood on their paws is excused because their reasons are better, right?

Is that still how it works? The guilty-not-guilty system was something like that when I was alive.

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Just remember that behind every conviction trial, there is a cat. A real one with family and standards and limits. I joke Buzzardflight has none of those, but I know he had to at some point.

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I have my rules: I won't eat any of the so-called prey that's in these woods. It's all rotten and usually covered in sludge or something red-which isn't blood.

There's also the maggots crawling in some creatures' flesh, so I could chew on those if I wanted.

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But I don't; that's too low for even me.

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Stormspeckle, however, not so much.

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This isn't either of their stories, though. Go ahead and call me self-centered, but I want to talk about me, not them. I'm the one here, so it's my chapter.

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You know yew, daisy, foxglove, and the other plants on that vein, right?

Basic poisoning prevention is taught to everyone in the glaring, you should.

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Well, it may have been different in your group, but either way, the plants are ones that can kill, and like dear Pebble's obsession with death, I had an affinity for all things *toxic*.

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It wasn't a healthy interest, I can admit that now, and if I had the opportunity to go back to life I'd do a few things differently. But the Star-blessed aren't known for their leniency or second chances; there's no point wailing for a way out when my choices that got me my spot here are done and over with.

I do still enjoy it, that feeling of power and secrecy, so I guess I'm not exactly the best candidate for a redo, anyway.

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There's a certain type of fun to having the ability to command life and death, even on a small scale.

The first I killed was an injured wanderer we were letting stay with us-by we I mean my glaring. She ate what we gave her, it was either that or she starved. When I caught her something that day, filled it with shredded yew berries and watched her writhe and foam at the mouth, I felt good. In control. Satisfied, even.

Though I'm still not totally sure how I wasn't found out then, to me it seems somewhat easy to put together.

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But the lack of death investigation aside, I continued my killing spree-if you can call it that, it stretched across many seasons. I got better at it, with more elaborate plans, more complicated and carefully thought out ways of hiding them.

It consumed me.

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Figuring out what poisons had what effects and how to conceal them was entertaining, sitting in front of a leader at a meeting and hearing someone else had died, lying through my teeth, giving my 'i'm so sorry this happened' and 'we'll find the cause'. It was exhilarating. I just wanted the rush of it half the time, probably for the same reason cats in here are always fighting.

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They want to feel something. We all do.

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On second thought, maybe not all of us, if Lilyfang had a conscience she might realize the weight of the things she's done. That on it's own would be enough to kill her again.

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But unrelated to her, seven cats took their final breaths because of me. I thought I was out of the water with all of them, but obviously not. Here I am, dead but not of old age or some other natural cause.

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By the time I realized what was happening, I didn't have a fighting chance. Inhaled too much water, was under for too long.

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I woke up here.

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I spend a lot of my time near the border, talking to any souls that stay long enough to hear what I have to say.

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The thing that our wounds never heal is true. I still have the same scab on my leg that I did while alive. Same torn ear, same slightly blurry and burning eye from getting debris in it a few moments before I was killed.

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Oh, and if you know or come across a cat named Redear? Tell him I'm not sorry over what I did, but I do wish the aftermath was different.

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All Chapters

A/N: All the chapters of Babble compiled for a quicker read, along with tags saying what chapter what lines are from.

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Trivia

-This story's first draft was written all in one night.

-Babblestream is a swirled tabby with yellow-green eyes.

-Redear was in an unhealthy relationship with one of the cats Babblestream murdered (one of her kills she thought was justified).

-The title is a play on Babblestream's name and the term babbling, as in talking wildly and excitedly.

-It's purposefully ironic that Babblestream was drowned in a stream.

-The cat that killed Babblestream, Swiftoak, considered poisoning her as a way of making her feel the pain her victims did.

-This story was originally supposed to be a oneshot for a different Dark Forest character of mine, Echoflare.

-The groups of cats in this story aren't called Clans, instead they're referred to as glarings or just groups.

-Loners are referred to as wanderers.

-Leaf-bare is referred to as the snow season

-Star-blessed is used to mean cats that, if in canon, would be StarClan members.

A/N: I hope you all liked this story; feel free to ask questions in the comments if you'd like.